

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Block Island School

March 16, 2009

6:30 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, March 16, 2009, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. The following members were present: Shea Butcher, Annie Hall, Sean McGarry, William Padien, and Richard Tretheway. Leslie Ryan, Davida Irving, and William Anderson were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (McGarry, Hall) to approve the minutes of the meetings held on January 26, February 3, and February 26, 2009, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (McGarry, Hall) to approve the executive session minutes of the meetings held on December 15, 2008, and January 26, 2009, as presented carried with a vote of 5-0.

Reports

Mrs. Ryan reported that correspondence was received from Commissioner McWalters regarding our request as to how our student athletes can compete off-island and still meet the 180 instructional days requirement. The Commissioner would be willing

to consent to a reasonable modification of the instructional day for the student athletes attending off-island events, but has asked for a more detailed instructional plan, including detailed time schedules. Mrs. Ryan suggested that she and Dr. Irving develop a plan to send to Commissioner McWalters for final approval and would have it available at the April School Committee meeting so it can be in effect for the 2009-2010 school year. A motion (Padien, Butcher) to direct the superintendent to work with the principal to come up with a reasonable modification to the day when our student athletes are off-island to submit to the Commissioner of Education carried with a vote of 5-0.

Mrs. Ryan gave a report from William Anderson, Director of Special Education, stating that the crisis prevention/de-escalation training of four three-hour sessions began on March 11 with two cohorts of staff participating. In addition, the site visit from the Department of Education's Office of Diverse Learners will begin with an orientation session on April 8. There will also be a data collection meeting on May 5 as well as the team review scheduled for May 20 and 21.

Mrs. Ryan gave a report from Principal Irving that included the following: A presentation to explain the NECAP results was held on March 11 for parents of students in grades 3-8. The School Improvement Team met on February 26 to review the four current goals. The secondary faculty continues its work on curriculum, which is being done in-house. A task force has been asked to

research the pros and cons of possibly eliminating valedictorian and salutatorian honors. If a decision is made to eliminate these honors, the current high school students through the class of 2013 would be grandfathered.

Mrs. Ryan gave a report from Amy Doran Couet, Maintenance Supervisor, which included the following: There are three new outdoor lights. One is on the southeast side lighting the sidewalk and two are on the south side lighting the parking lot. They have been connected to the timer as requested. Repairs were made to the magnetic doors outside the superintendent's office. Annual inspections of our fire extinguishers, exit signs, and the kitchen fire suppression system are being done. A plan has been developed for snow removal and it is hoped that a snow blower can be purchased so that all the exits are easily accessible during an emergency.

It was mentioned that some of the sidewalks on High Street were not cleared this winter, which forced students to walk in the street. Town Manager Nancy Dodge reported from the audience that the town is also looking into the purchase of a snow blower to make sure that the sidewalks are clear if home owners are not on-island.

Mrs. Ryan thanked everyone for being extremely hospitable and making Mr. Yang's visit such a success.

A packet of information on the 2006-2008 NECAP results was

submitted for School Committee review. Mrs. Ryan included the results from Barrington and five South County districts for comparison. Of the 36 districts in Rhode Island, Block Island is the third highest in reading, seventh highest in math, and 11th highest in writing. Mrs. Ryan feels that remedial work in writing should be the first priority. She made several suggestions for an action plan to ensure that our students know how to write. Dr. Irving reminded the School Committee that the writing test is given in only four grades and it is hard to compare from year to year. The math and reading exams are given to all students in grades 3-8, which makes it easier to compare. She also stressed that percentages in a small district with only a few students in a particular grade can throw off the scores and we need to be careful when comparing ourselves to larger districts. Sean McGarry requested that this information, which has been available online for several months, be submitted to the committee prior to budget time so funds can be allocated when necessary. Dr. Irving suggested that a study group be formed when the results are received next year to analyze the data for an earlier presentation to the School Committee. A motion (Padien, McGarry) to direct the Superintendent and Principal to read and analyze the NECAP results as soon as possible in the future so that any financial impact can be addressed at budget time carried with a vote of 5-0.

The standing of accounts as of December 31, 2008, January 31, 2009, and February 28, 2009, were submitted for School Committee review. Nancy Cole pointed out that no invoices have been received from the

attorney this fiscal year. It was suggested that Mrs. Ryan send a note to Attorney Myers requesting them. William Padien stated that it may be necessary in the near future to freeze some line items or transfer funds from one line item to another to cover shortfalls and requested that all consultants be paid on a monthly basis to have a more accurate picture of those accounts. Mr. Padien requested that Mrs. Cole revisit the fund balance for an updated projection. A motion (Padien, Hall) to accept December, January and February financial statements carried with a vote of 5-0.

Old Business

Policy HE: Emergency Coverage during Periods When No Administrators Are Present was presented for a second vote because it was not unanimously approved by all five committee members at last month's meeting. A motion (Hall, Tretheway) to approve Policy HE: Emergency Coverage during Periods When No Administrators Are Present carried with a vote of 5-0.

The proposed school calendar for 2009-2010 was submitted for School Committee review. Several suggested changes included adding an extra day to the February vacation, starting school before Labor Day, adding a day to the Thanksgiving recess, and adding a day in March for a long weekend. It was felt that the extra day during the February vacation created an undo burden on families who did not go away. It was noted that several faculty members did not have year-round housing and finding a place to stay before Labor Day

could be difficult. A motion (Padien, Butcher) to begin the 2009-2010 school year (the students' first day of school) on Thursday, September 3, 2009, carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, Butcher) to include Wednesday, November 25, 2009, as part of the Thanksgiving recess carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien, McGarry) to include Monday, March 22, 2010, as a day off carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Padien McGarry) to approve the 2009-2010 school calendar as amended carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (Tretheway, Padien) to pay athletic coaches as employees, not as consultants, and that this new procedure start with the 2009-2010 fiscal year as the funds for payroll taxes, etc. are not included in this year's budget carried with a vote of 5-0. Mr. Padien requested that each consultant have a signed contract and be paid through payroll as well. Richard Tretheway stated that there are regulations that differentiate between consultants and employees and that some of our consultants should not be treated as employees. Mr. Padien requested that the administration research this and report back to the School Committee.

New Business

An updated version of Policy FBG: Honor

Roll/Valedictorian/Salutatorian Eligibility was submitted for School Committee review. It had been reworked by Dr. Irving, members of the Principal's Advisory Committee, and Attorney Myers. A motion (Hall, Padien) to post Policy FBG: Honor Roll/Valedictorian/Salutatorian for the required 30-day period carried with a vote of 5-0.

Policy ID: Extra-Curricular/Athletic Participation, which was updated by Mr. Padien and sent to Attorney Myers for her perusal, was presented for School Committee review. A motion (Hall, Butcher) to post Policy ID: Extra-Curricular/Athletic Participation for the required 30-day period carried with a vote of 4-1 with Richard Tretheway voting in the negative.

Mr. Padien stated that there are two assistant varsity baseball coaches at five points each listed in Policy HC: Athletic Compensation. He suggested that one of those be reduced to 2.5 points and that a second assistant coach be added for varsity softball at 2.5 points. A motion (Padien, Hall) to revise Policy HC: Athletic Compensation to reduce the points for the second assistant baseball coach to 2.5, to add a second assistant softball coach at 2.5 points, and to post the revised policy for the required 30-day period carried with a vote of 5-0.

Policy DEA: Application for Use of School Facility and Conditions Controlling the Use of School Facilities was submitted for School

Committee review, along with suggested policy changes made by Attorney Myers. Maintenance Supervisor/custodian Amy Doran Couet submitted other changes. In addition, correspondence was received from The Trust informing us of TULIP (Tenant User Liability Insurance Program), which requires tenant users of our facilities to obtain an insurance policy that protects both the tenant and the school for bodily injury or property damage arising out of the use of the school by the tenant. This insurance policy requirement would affect anyone not under the town's umbrella requesting the use of our facilities. A TULIP policy is easily attainable through The Trust web site. It was suggested that the Superintendent and Principal review all suggestions, including the TULIP policy, to improve the policy already in place and have it ready for the April 6 meeting. In the meantime, anyone who applies to use the facility must have the TULIP coverage. Regarding the facility use fee, it was suggested that a nominal fee be charged per activity or season and not be based on an hourly amount. Members were willing to waive the facility use fee for activities for Block Island School students. Mr. McGarry suggested a weighting system similar to the one in athletic compensation policy, which would allow the committee to change the cost per point without having to change the policy each time.

Policy BAH: Duties of the Chairperson and Policy BAI: Duties of the Secretary, which are part of the School Committee Bylaws, were submitted for review to clarify how many and whose signatures are required on the school's general operating and miscellaneous office

accounts. Signature cards were signed for the lunch account when Mr. McGarry became School Committee secretary and this account requires only one signature, either the chair's or the secretary's. Two signatures, both the chair and the secretary, are required on the general operating account.

A request for a waiver of the facility use fees was received from Jill Connell for dance/aerobics classes scheduled for February 22, March 1, and 22, 2009. A motion (Padien, Hall) to waive the facility use fee for the BICEP sponsored dance classes carried with a vote of 5-0.

A request for a waiver of the facility use fees for the spring and summer programs being sponsored by the Recreation Department was received. A motion (Padien, Hall) to waive the facility use fees for programs being sponsored by the Recreation Department (Toddler Time; Indoor Soccer; Baseball Skills Clinic; Pepsi Pitch, Hit, and Run; Junior Olympics; Spring Volleyball League; Shad Bloom Registration/Race; Summer Youth Basketball League; Adult Summer Basketball League; Basketball Camp; US Multi-Sport Camp; Karate; Camp Mohegan; and Karate Camp) and to get clarification on the TULIP program carried with a vote of 4-1 with Sean McGarry voting in the negative.

A request was received from the New Shoreham Employees' Association to reevaluate the job description of the school's fiscal clerk for possible reclassification. A motion (Padien, Butcher) to

approve the request to reevaluate the job description of the school's fiscal clerk for possible reclassification carried with a vote of 5-0. All members of the committee expressed interest in participating in this discussion. It is hoped that a work session can be scheduled for next week.

A motion (McGarry, Hall) to reopen the 2008-2009 general operating budget carried with a vote of 5-0.

It was explained that, for various reasons, there is a shortfall of approximately \$26,000 in the special education line item. A motion (Padien, McGarry) to freeze all discretionary spending in the current budget except for contractual items and address each on a case-by-case basis did not carry with a vote of 2-3 with Shea Butcher, Annie Hall, and Richard Tretheway voting in the negative.

Mrs. Ryan provided a list of line items where funds could be taken to cover about \$8000 of the shortfall. She suggested that \$500 be moved from the administration department supplies, \$1000 from school-wide supplies, \$1000 from extra educational opportunities, \$500 from sports, \$1000 from instructional collaboration, \$1000 from fuel oil, \$2000 from building supplies, and \$1000 from grounds maintenance. Mrs. Cole reported that she has requested reimbursement of some funds through IDEA and Title 2, which should amount to \$4,822. According to Mr. Anderson, the total amount of \$12,822 would not cover what is required through the end of this

school year. Several students have been referred and will need to be evaluated. It was decided that the School Committee would see how long this transfer of funds would last and revisit if/when necessary. A motion (McGarry, Butcher) to change the 2008-2009 budget by reducing the administration department supplies line item to \$7,000; reducing the education department school-wide supplies to \$16,000; reducing the extra educational opportunities to \$7600; reducing sports to \$65,700; reducing instructional collaboration to \$1500; reducing the building and maintenance department supplies line item to \$20,000; reducing grounds maintenance line item to \$6,000; reducing fuel oil line item to \$57,000; and to increase the special education consultants line item to \$43,000 carried with a vote of 5-0.

A motion (McGarry, Hall) to close the 2008-2009 budget work session and to seal the budget carried with a vote of 5-0.

Calendar of Events

A calendar of events for the months of March and April was submitted for School Committee information. The next regular School Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 6, 2009.

Correspondence

Various pieces of correspondence were forwarded for School Committee information.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Hall) at 8:48 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 5-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: April 7, 2009